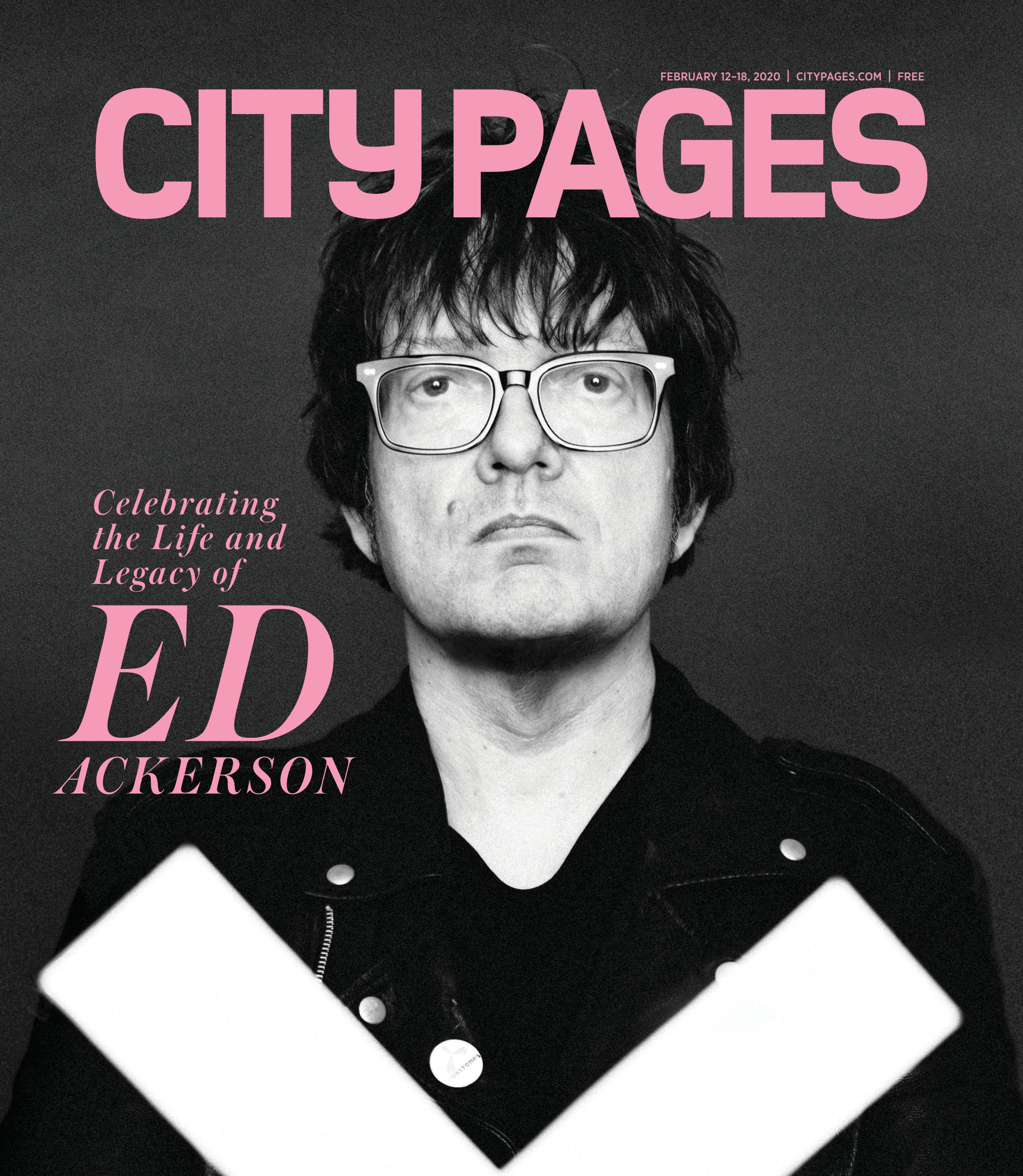


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ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages is located at 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. City Pages is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies of the current issue may be purchased at the City Pages office for \$1, payable in advance. No person may, without prior written permission of City Pages, take more than one copy of each City Pages weekly issue. Subscriptions are available for \$100 per year. Subscription orders must include check or money order payable to City Pages, and should be mailed to City Pages Subscriptions, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Postmaster: Send address changes to City Pages, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488.

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FEBRUARY 5-26

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MARCH 4-25

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**WINNERS ANNOUNCED ON
APRIL 22, 2020**

THE SHORTLIST

6 soups to slurp this February
at citypages.com



JD HOVLAND

THE STAT SHEET

32

Rural MN counties that still don't have access to the opioid addiction treatment drug Suboxone

476

Hmong and Lao immigrants in MN who could be affected by new Trump deportation proposal

Feb. 20

Date St. Paul teachers' union reps will vote whether to give permission to call a strike

8,000+

Students in state schools experiencing homelessness

"I saw the Deftones play in that McDonald's parking lot back in 1996. Can't tear it down, it's historical."

Reader Chad McBride responds to "Dinkytown McDonald's redevelopment plan continues to die slow death" at citypages.com

A DONE DRILL

IT'S ESTIMATED 95 PERCENT of U.S. public schools hold regular active shooter drills... but are they even effective? And worse: Are they needlessly traumatizing students? MPR reports that two big teachers' unions—the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association—are asking schools to reevaluate whether these lockdown drills are worth it. In a new paper, the groups say they do not recommend active shooter training, citing emerging evidence that it causes trauma, anxiety, depression, and worsening school performance. "Those terrifying and traumatizing drills—they have no basis in fact and they harm more than they have ever helped," AFT president Randi Weingarten told MPR.

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LOONATIC

One Republican is holding up \$1.3 million to help save our state bird

Our state bird, the common loon, has an uncommon problem. Every now and again, a loon will dive down to lake beds, scoop up something roughly the size of a pea, and swallow it. If it's a pebble, it's great for the loon's digestion. It becomes a problem when the bird mistakenly swallows a lead sinker instead.

Anglers like to use sinkers to weigh down their lines and catch deep-water fish. But when these little balls of metal slip off the line and get lost, they routinely end up in the bellies of loons, diving ducks, and swans.

What follows is agony, starting with confusion and trembling, and ending in emaciation and death. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency estimates this is what's been killing 14 percent of the state's loons.

The state has a plan to help stop it. An application the MPCA filed in September would tap \$1.27 million in settlement money

from the BP oil spill settlement toward protecting the loon population.

As of January 1, that money could be used for an awareness campaign asking fishers to ditch the lead and use nontoxic sinkers.

But we don't have that money yet, because Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria) doesn't want us to. The Senate Finance Committee chairman has effectively blocked the grant until he can hold a committee hearing on the subject after the session starts.

Rep. Rick Hansen (D-South St. Paul) calls Ingebrigtsen's move "stunning," but says this is a "consistent pattern" with Minnesota Republicans regarding lead.

"Efforts to study, reasearch, educate, or change behavior regarding outdoor use of lead are opposed," Hansen says.

Back in 2015 and 2016, the Department of Natural Resources suggested banning lead birdshot on state-owned hunting land in half the state, and the National Rifle Asso-



BRIAN MARK PETERSON, STAR TRIBUNE

ciation and various hunting groups came down as heavily against the idea as... well, lead. (The NRA's website paints the effort as an "attack" by anti-hunting groups whose "ultimate goal" is to ban hunting altogether.)

Ingebrigtsen didn't respond to interview requests, but he told the Star Tribune his stance had nothing to do with lead, and that he wants to ask the MPCA if they might use the grant to hire more full-time people.

"I wanted to hold their feet to the fire," he said. He told MPR that he wasn't opposed to the campaign, he just wanted to hear "exactly" how the money would be spent. Ingebrigtsen also said he expected funding to be approved early in the session.

But Hansen says this could have been resolved "months ago." He's currently getting a bill drafted to let the agency spend the money, and he says he and colleagues will put it forward "as soon as [they] can."

Unless Bill has a change of heart. "I would ask [Senator Ingebrigtsen] to release the funds and save some loons," he says.

Other issues Ingebrigtsen has championed over the course of his legislative career include a 2011 bill to make English Minnesota's official language, taking a stand against legalizing medical marijuana in 2014, and his attempt to eliminate the Environmental Quality Board in 2017. —HANNAH JONES



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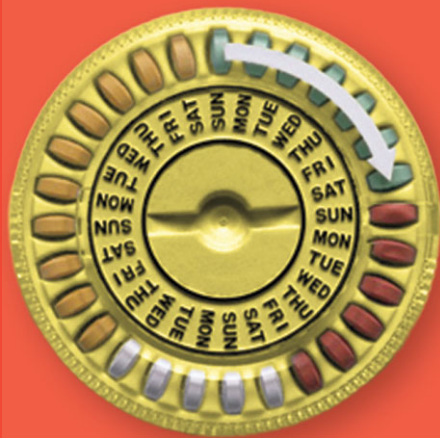


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CELEBRATING THE LIFE & LEGACY OF

ED ACKERSON

by ERIK THOMPSON

I'm left with all of this," Ashley Ackerson says. She's surrounded by the music her husband, Ed, recorded over his 35-year music career—LPs, CDs, 7-inches—and the instruments and gear he made it with, in the very room where he worked: Flowers Studio in Uptown Minneapolis.

"Sometimes I sit around and cry through it all," Ashley says. "But it's also amazing. I can feel him sitting in this room, and in the house—it all feels very warm to me. Like he's here."

Ed Ackerson died on October 4, 2019, at age 54, after being diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer a year earlier. But at Flowers his spirit is still alive. He bought this former greenhouse in 1996 and built it into one of the best recording studios in

the country, working with veterans like the reunited Replacements and younger bands like Motion City Soundtrack. The studio, still going strong after his death, is as much his legacy as the music he made—something tangible he left behind for Ashley and their 4-year-old daughter, Annika.

That legacy will be front and center this Saturday at First Avenue's Ed Ackerson Celebration of Life Benefit. Ed's bands will perform, as will musicians he worked with

and produced over the years: the Jayhawks, the Kraig Johnson Experience, Mark Mallman, and Two Harbors. (Proceeds will benefit the Ed Ackerson Family Fund and the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.)

"It's not going to be a tribute rock show—it's going to be a proper rock show like Ed would want," Ashley says. "What Ed would love is bands to play their own music. He probably would vomit if everyone was just covering his songs all night."



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The Dig



27 Various



Ed Ackerson appeared on the Minneapolis music scene in the heady days of the '80s. But while other local bands opted for the noisier garage-punk or hardcore made famous by the Replacements and Hüsker Dü, Ed's short-lived band the Dig distinguished themselves with a clean mod-rock sound heavily influenced by the Jam. The Dig wore suits on stage, and their sound echoed the early Who and the Small Faces.

"Ed was faithful to his mod influences in just about every way," says Chris Pavlich, frontman of Two Harbors, who met Ackerson in the mid-'90s. "He pulled up on his old Vespa scooter wearing a Fred Perry shirt, mod haircut, and sunnies. Basically, straight out of *Quadrophenia*."

Ed brought that same smart sense of style to the stage, which set him apart from the tattered grunge look of the time. "The Blue Boy Rickenbacker, the hair, the clothes... I loved that about him. Effortlessly cool," says Pavlich.

Or so it seemed: That level of cool required hours of unseen effort. Ed was a self-taught musician who learned how to play the old-fashioned way, experimenting on his guitar while carefully studying the songs in his record collection.

"He taught himself all the instruments, including drums, piano, keyboards. He just kept going, and working and pushing himself to be better," says Ashley. "He

never was formally trained, but his IQ was really high; he was valedictorian of Stillwater High School. He had a scholarship offer to Yale. He could have been a doctor or a lawyer, but he pursued music and indie rock instead." She laughs. "For

better or for worse."

Ed also formed a record label in the mid-'80s, Susstones, with his friend John Kass. Starting with early 7-inches by the Dig, Susstones would continue to release Ed's music, as well as that of his friends and cohorts, throughout the rest of his life.

The Dig didn't last long, breaking up for the same reason most bands do: They fought

**ED ACKERSON
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Harriet Bart, *Pendulum*, 2003. Collection of the artist.



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Gregory Euclide (American, b. 1974), *What I Found at the Falls What Cautions Release on the Land*, 2013. Mixed media.

Polara



constantly. Ed formed the 27 Various in 1986, fusing his love of Pete Townsend and Paul Weller with the sprawling psychedelia of the 13th Floor Elevators and early Pink Floyd. Ed had a unique ability to balance pop hooks and musical experimentation, with his jangly, psych-heavy guitar riffs always front and center.

"Some musicians are very good at crafting sound, and some are good at crafting songs, but very, very few are good at both," says Christian Erickson, a music scene contemporary who first met Ed in the late '90s. "We became fast friends, and after that I saw and heard most of what he was doing both live and in the studio. He saw music as both texture and structure—the way things sounded was as important as the song being played. To him, a song was much more than a collection of words and chords—it was a total experience."

Though the 27 Various made their mark on the Minneapolis scene before disbanding in 1992, Ed's music was still not widely known outside Minnesota. After he formed Polara in 1994, that all changed.

"Polara was very much this band of unsupervised siblings squabbling about everything in the basement, and Ed was kind of the oldest brother who tried his best to keep a lid on it," recalls Dan Boen, Polara bassist and a longtime collaborator of Ed's. "That was great for our live energy, but when it was time to record, he'd become the producer and we all deferred to that. He was great at getting good performances out of everyone, and really good at making people play together, which doesn't always happen. Once it all was working, Ed would smile and say, 'There it goes. Sounds like rock to me.'"

**"HE TAUGHT
HIMSELF
ALL THE
INSTRUMENTS,
INCLUDING
DRUMS, PIANO,
KEYBOARDS."**



Polara

With Polara, Ed truly refined and perfected the stormy psych-pop sound he had been building toward. The band's 1995 self-titled debut led to a major-label bidding war, with the band eventually signing to Interscope Records in 1996 and recording three albums for the imprint.

The Celebration of Life show marks the exact 25th anniversary of Polara's debut, and Ashley will celebrate the occasion by releasing the record on vinyl—translucent orange vinyl, no less—for the first time. "The first Polara record really started it all, and it's why this studio exists," says Ashley. "And Ed knows that it's finally coming out on vinyl. That was his wish."

Ashley and Ed first met (where else?) at Flowers in 1998, at one of the famous New Year's Eve parties Ed threw each year at the studio.

"We started to hang out that next year, and the rest is history," Ashley says. "We

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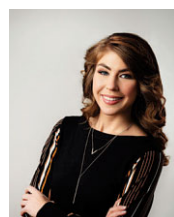
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knew we had a special thing early on. I moved in in February 2001, and we decided to get married for the fun of it in September 2007. There was never any pressure, we were always best friends. We loved to do the same things, had the same passion for music, and had big dreams of raising Annika and growing old together. We just loved being together, it really didn't matter what we were doing." They moonlighted in each other's bands (Ed playing bass in Ashley's band the Mood Swings and Ashley joining Polara's later lineup), then formed BNLX together in 2010 along with drummer David Jarnstrom.

"We started the band specifically to make bold statements, both musically and conceptually," Ed told City Pages in 2017. A Sonic Youth-like screed, "Message From HR" is built from vacuous corporate-speak: "Got a message from HR/A Memorandum/Your Attitude defines your altitude/Every setback is an opportunity/Together everyone achieves more." As Ed put it in 2012, "I like the sugar-coated pill aspect of writing a cultural critique or a political

critique with a song that's easy to dance to and sticks in your head."

Those statements were also political when the moment demanded it: The 2016 election prompted the band to return from a two-year hiatus with the anthem "Resist! Resist!" "There's a long road ahead toward progress," Ed said at the time. "This song is something to hum, sing, or shout along with while we all move forward together."

BNLX's marketing techniques were just as innovative and provocative as their music. Longtime music scene mainstay and journalist PD Larson took on the role as a self-described "press officer" for Susstones, harking back to the days of the Beatles and the Stones, but with a mischievous modern twist.

"We tried to incorporate this real over-the-top subversive press strategy with a lot of corporate speak that Ed was picking up from Ashley's world at Target," Larson says. "We wanted this air of mystery. They went by the names A.A. and E.A. and their pictures were intentionally blurry. It was counterintuitive of what you would normally do, especially with someone like Ed who had a track record by then. But instead of exploiting that, it was kind of obscuring it, which he greatly enjoyed."

BNLX released a series of quick-hitting EPs in the 2010s that the band referred to as Quarterly Reports, as well as two full-length LPs, and Ed continued to draw inspiration from younger bands around town. Rather than competing with the next generation, which wasn't in his nature, he offered advice as well as recording time at Flowers.

"Ed's support gave us legitimacy in the Minneapolis scene and also the confidence that people liked what we were doing," says Devon Bryant, bassist in Fury

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BEST — *of the* —
TWIN CITIES



Things, a then-fledgling band that played many shows with BNLX and recorded at Flowers. Bryant recalls playing the Ackerson-curated BNLXFest—and having to close the show. “Going on after BNLX with their full-on production and light show was a little bit humbling. I think Ed could tell that made us a little nervous, because he let us keep their light show when we played. A very classy and generous move from a classy and generous guy.”

“He always valued the scene here, and never stopped growing with it,” Ashley says. “Even as he got older, he always connected to younger people. He threw these Sussedtaculars and BNLXFests, and he’d always pick up one or two new bands, these 20-year-olds, new kids on the scene. There was still this great connection and love for music, this synergy and community. There was always a community around him. He never wanted to just put out his own art, he always wanted to support everybody else. That’s why he revitalized Susstones and opened the studio up not only for his own art but so other people could pursue their dreams here.”

Ed also became a highly sought-after producer, working with the Jayhawks, Golden Smog, Motion City Soundtrack, and Soul Asylum, as well as producing the Replacements’ final recordings, the *Songs for Slim* EP.

“I’ve known Paul and Tommy forever,” Ed said at the time. “They like to work fast, capture the moment and spirit, and our studio is designed to make that sort



of thing happen easily. Basically, we just set up the rock and roll band and waited to see what happened.”

“Great engineers know how to capture the energy of a band, but great producers are capable of shaping that energy into something better and more powerful. I think Ed did both extremely well,” says Erickson. “He had a great sense for the narrative drama in music—like, how does a song pull you in and what journey

does it take you on. He also knew when to push for technical perfection and when to push for character and imperfection. A lot of vocalists said he was one of the best producers in town at getting great singing performances out of people. And I think that dual focus on feel and finesse was the reason why.”

It was Pete Townsend who broke the news of Ed’s illness. Ackerson had kept the news under wraps, but during the Who’s 2019 St. Paul show, his

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VALUED THE
SCENE HERE,
AND NEVER
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Siskiyou Sungrown brings the best organic cannabidiol tinctures, balms and treats to customers across the country from its family-owned and operated farms in Oregon. Now, a new ranking list from Marijuana SEO ranked Siskiyou as one of the top 16 cannabis companies of the new year.

By offering both THC-based marijuana products for customers in states where recreational and medicinal marijuana are legal along with non-psychoactive CBD products for those in other states, Siskiyou has grown established as a leader among hemp endeavors.

Marijuana SEO is a firm for cannabis advertising, but the importance of industry acknowledgements for valuable brands like Siskiyou Sungrown can hardly be overstated.

In an often wild and newfangled market for CBD and hemp products, people don't always know where to turn to get their products.

As more find out how many normal people swear by CBD for their anxiety, insomnia, they've sometimes encountered obstacles en route to learning the ins and outs of the industry, especially which products to trust.

Luckily, all Siskiyou Sungrown CBD products are lab-tested, organic and offer full-spectrum CBD relief. People use the CBD oils and tinctures for a litany of uses, and its proven quality and industry recognition make it a great addition to the Nothing But Hemp roster.

"I'm proud to see Siskiyou Sungrown on this list of the top 16 cannabis brands for 2020," Nothing But Hemp CEO Steven Brown said. "Organic from start to finish, from soil to oil, Siskiyou Sungrown continues to set the bar for health and wellness cannabinoid products."

Nothing But Hemp prides itself on connecting customers with products they can trust and providing CBD science education and guidance for newcomers and veterans of the market alike.

As Nothing But Hemp's signature house brand, Siskiyou Sungrown CBD has proved the company proud yet again for its quality of service and offerings. No matter your CBD and hemp needs, Nothing But Hemp can connect you with products like Siskiyou Sungrown in Nevada, Florida and Minnesota, as well as online.

Siskiyou products join other leading CBD brands like Charlotte's Web CBD, Wyld CBD vapes, and Minny Grown CBD among Nothing But Hemp's catalogue. Visit a Nothing But Hemp location today, and be sure to ask about Siskiyou Sungrown organic CBD!

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Ed with
Annika
and Ashley

hero offered his support from the stage: “Ed, I hope you recover. God bless Ed!”

A month later, Ed Ackerson was gone. But he was making music right up until the end, and some of those last recordings will be made available for the first time at the First Ave show. One of Ed’s final projects, *Capricorn One*, will be offered on limited-edition hot pink vinyl. “Pantone 806 C!” says Ashley with a chuckle.

“He did it all himself, top to bottom, every single piece of it—drums, keyboards, piano, vocals, all of it,” Ashley says. “Ed produced, engineered, and wrote it all. We’re calling it ‘the space rock journey.’ It is, in my opinion, the best of everything he’s done. A lot of people are going back in time and getting into the Dig and 27 Various and the Ackerson solo records, and that’s great. But I encourage people to listen to his new stuff too.”

Ashley fights through tears as she continues. “Going through a loss like this is horrible. Without the music community I don’t know what I’d do. Not only the community here in Minneapolis, but the music community at large has been very supportive. Many people have reached out and offered support. It means so much.”

A GoFundMe page for Ashley and Annika organized by Dan Boen has raised over \$73,000, and there’s a forthcoming tribute album to Ed organized by his Swedish friend Jonatan Westh. “It started while Ed was alive and we tried to keep it a secret from him,” says Ashley, who hopes to release it later this year to celebrate Ed’s birthday.

The fact that rock and roll is still being played in Flowers is a source of deep comfort to Ashley, with musicians dropping in not only to check on how she’s doing, but also to make some welcome noise in the studio that Ed built.

Kris Johnson, guitarist in Two Harbors and one of Ed’s best friends, is now Flowers’ head engineer and studio manager. “As Ed’s illness was progressing, he told me he wanted me to take over the stu-



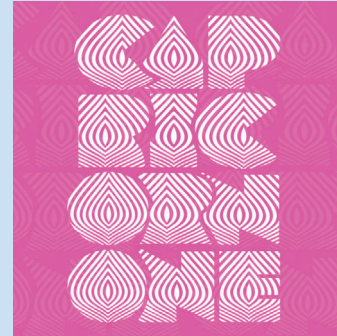
dio and to ensure that it lived on,” says Johnson. “And he told me what his vision of that was. It’s hard to put into words what that means to me. For Ed, his studio was an extension of himself, and who he was as a person. It’s the summation of everything he had spent his entire life building. And to be entrusted with that is a massive thing.”

The future of Flowers Studio is still unwritten, but Ashley has some ideas. “Annika is only four, but this is her studio if she wants to have it someday,” she says. “This thing could probably never be built again, and Uptown is too expensive, it would be impossible to start this thing from scratch again now. So, I feel grateful that Ed had the vision, the foresight, and the guts to invest in this. He took his money and didn’t blow it all on drugs or champagne or whatever, and put it into this place. It’s expensive to keep it going, but it’s one of a kind, and I’d love Annika to have the opportunity to see if it’s something she wants and to explore it.

“Maybe she’ll be a producer—she’s singing all the time. And Ed got her into the Small Faces already, so we’re good there.”

AN ED ACKERSON PRIMER

A six-album introduction to his sound and style



CAPRICORN ONE

Capricorn One (2020)

“Start with the newest one. That is what Ed would want,” Ashley says of his final solo project. “He always looked forward. This is what he was doing just last year.”

POLARA - *Polara* (1995)

This record helped bring Ed’s music talents to a wider audience, resulting in the major-label deal with Interscope Records that would help pay for Flowers Studio. Polara sounded different than any other band in the Twin Cities at the time. They still do.

BNLX - *Produit Collecté* (2013)

This compilation of the first eight BNLX EPs (which are now out of print) includes newer songs and covers, such as a blistering take on Black Flag’s “Rise Above.” The LP comes with a download card for over 100 minutes of music from the band. “That’s a lot of punk rock per dollar!”

ED ACKERSON - *Ackerson* (2006) and *Ackerson 2* (2007)

On his first two solo records, Ed stripped away the noisy, electric fuzz of his other work. Mostly acoustic, these unguarded, reflective songs showcase his songwriting and lyrical talents as well as his clean production style.

THE 27 VARIOUS - *Fine* (1992)

With its hazy guitar squalls, plentiful hooks, and driving rhythms, the final Various album serves as a precursor to where Ed would eventually take his sound with Polara.

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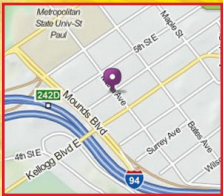
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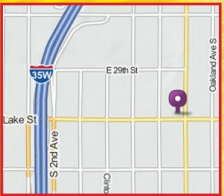
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BY MATTY TUCKER

Marc Heu Patisserie Paris probably shouldn't be here. Only through a heck of a lot of luck and one man's laser-specific goal of opening a French patisserie in St. Paul has the Twin Cities been blessed with its most modest world-class pastry shop yet.

Chef Marc Heu was born in France to Hmong parents who fled their native Laos as refugees after the Vietnam War. At the age of three, Heu's family moved to French Guiana, where they built a farm to grow and sell produce. But 10 years living in France taught Heu's parents that proper celebrations called for pastries.

"[They] couldn't afford to go to a pastry shop, so they would just get the basic ingredients: milk, eggs, and flour," says Heu. "It would be my older siblings baking... I was helping and I loved it!"

In early adulthood, Heu pursued a medical degree in Limoges, France. While visiting family in Minnesota in 2012, Heu met the woman he'd marry and decided to stay here. When his credits wouldn't transfer to the American system, he started over, taking the GED, ACT, and applying to community college. But he couldn't go through with it again.

Heu remembers he was lying in bed the night before another first day of school, when his wife said, "Don't do it. I know you won't be happy."

"I guess in the back of my mind I wanted to please my parents," says Heu, "but at some point I was like, 'It's my life.'"

By April of 2018, Heu had enrolled in a six-month pastry program at Paris's Ecole Lenôtre. "They teach you—it's not necessarily a secret—but to be true to the ingredient.... If you start with something good, at the end you should have something good, or even better if you put the skills, the knowledge into it."

While studying in Paris, an odd visit to 18th-century pastry shop Stohrer proved fateful for Heu when he recognized executive chef Jeffery Cagnes and asked to meet him. "[Cagnes] asked me what I was doing, what school I was going to and when I was going to be done. So he told me, 'Why don't you come intern here when you're done?'"

"I mean, I did not ask for nothing.... Everything started like that," Heu recalls, with tears in his eyes. "I can't believe he offered me that opportunity."

After his internship, Heu stayed at Stohrer for an additional two months. "Cagnes asked what I was going to do when

HEU'S THE BOSS

How a Hmong Frenchman conjured St. Paul's premier pastry destination



ALMA GUZMAN

I came back to the U.S. and I told him, 'I'm going to open a pastry shop.' I remember him and the sous chef... they were laughing!" A pastry chef opening their own shop is usually a goal achieved after years of learning and practice, but Heu could see no other way. "I don't want to work for anybody. My parents, they are farmers, so they're kind of like their own boss. So all my life I had a picture of working, being your own boss, working for yourself."

When Heu returned to Minnesota in late 2018, he began running a pastry catering business out of his in-laws' house making cakes and other pastries. He quickly gained a following on social media. The sheer volume of work demanded he find commercial space to keep pace. He found a spot at the corner of University and Western Avenue in St. Paul's Frogtown neighborhood, and moved his catering operation there in April 2019.

"I wasn't supposed to open until [May 2020]. We had the Little Mekong Night Market [last July] so we decided to do a pop-up. But people thought it was the grand opening," says Heu. "It was Saturday, Sunday, the [Night Market]... and then on Monday, people were lining up!"

Not wanting to disappoint, Marc Heu Patisserie Paris opened its doors to the public on August 1, 2019. Presently, they provide counter service with pastries to-go. Attentive, handsomely dressed staff is on hand to answer questions and carefully package items in pristine white boxes. The "menu" is a row of glass domes holding the day's offerings, with tiny gold prices displayed beneath.

To this day, Heu seeks out suppliers with chocolate and vanilla beans from France, and hazelnuts from Italy's Piedmont region—"the Rolls Royce of hazelnuts," Heu claims. He's particularly choosy about the French high-fat butter he sources: "If

it has too much water, when you laminate it goes into the dough."

French baked goods fall into three main categories: boulangerie, patisserie, and viennoiserie. Boulangerie are the breads, like baguettes and sourdough loaves. Patisserie are cakes, tarts, and eclairs—the sweet stuff. Viennoiserie are the buttery, flaky croissant, pain au chocolat, and kouign amman. As a shop, Marc Heu Patisserie Paris specializes in the latter two types.

Viennoiserie relies on the following lamination process. "On paper it's two to three days, but mine takes almost five."

Heu sandwiches a layer of butter between two layers of dough, rolls it flat, folds it in on itself, then rests it. "I do one double turn and one single turn," says

Heu, explaining how he creates 12 layers of alternating dough and butter on the first fold, and triples that to 36 layers on the second.

He then rests the dough for two days before cutting, shaping, proofing, and finally baking. In the oven, the butter melts into the dough and steams air pockets into the pastry, creating a soft, airy texture with a crisp, flaky crust and a rich, buttery flavor. He starts this process on Tuesdays to make croissants for Saturdays.

"I tried rushing," Heu laments, "and trust me: It's not good."

In the kitchen, Heu leads a team of four women. "In France it's all men. It's funny that here I'm doing it with a bunch of strong women. I love it!" They're also mostly home bakers, inexperienced in professional baking but eager to learn.

"At first I wanted to bring people from France, but people here need jobs, too, and they want to learn," says Heu, of training his staff from the ground up. "I make sure that the stuff that comes out is good... but the kitchen can be run by my staff; they are way more than qualified now."

Heu's pastries are accurate to tradition, eschewing innovation for perfect execution. "My whole idea is, I want to bring a little bit of a taste of Paris to Minnesota," he says.

"I have so much support from all the community, from everybody. Frogtown, they welcome me. I'm just living a dream right now," says the chef, who earned a 2020 Charlie Award nomination for best Baker/Pastry Chef (Katie Elsing of The Lynhall took home the honor).

"I do what I love. I'm able to make a living out of it. I'm able to make jobs. I'm not rich, but it's enough."

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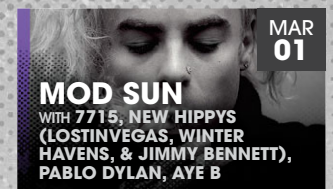
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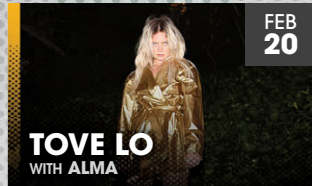
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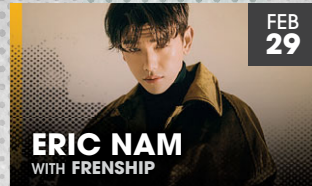
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PALACE THEATRE



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MAR 14



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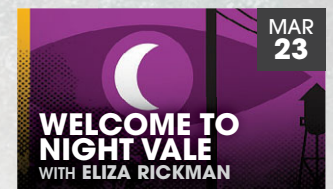
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W/ CEREMONY

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FEB 26



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FEB 28



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W/ BRIAN JUST

FEB 13



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FEB 18



TALL HEIGHTS
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FEB 15



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FEB 19

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FEB 18



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W/ RYAN ACKER OF THE LAST REVEL

FEB 21



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EP RELEASE
W/ MARVALADE, OFTENER, ALLEN BOOK CLUB

FEB 16



JASIAH AND \$NOT
W/ haroinfather

FEB 21



joan
W/ RALPH

FEB 17



SLOW HOLLOWS
W/ DAD BOD

FEB 22

BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS
FT. HAZEL MILLER

WITH LOS COLOGNES

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21
PALACE THEATRE

A LIST

SATURDAY Ragamala heads to Ordway p. 23

SUNDAY Trixie Mattel comes to town p. 23

MONDAY It's time for Girl Scout cookies and beer p. 25

WEDNESDAY 2.12

COMEDY

KEVIN BOZEMAN

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"No one told me I was funny or that I should be onstage," says comedian Kevin Bozeman. "But once I started doing standup, everybody was like, 'We knew you'd end up onstage!'" He describes his life before comedy as a blur. He played Division III college basketball at Whitewater College, and after graduation he worked a series of what he calls odds-and-ends jobs. "Just a lot of stuff that made me unhappy," he recalls. "I sold insurance. People used to ask me, 'Why should I buy life insurance?' And I used to tell them, 'Because I need a commission check.'" He started doing standup in Madison, Wisconsin, near his college. These days, he likes to talk onstage about things that make people uncomfortable. "I talk about parenting properly, saying things about your kids you definitely don't want to say. I talk about relationships, politics. I push the envelope." 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$20; \$30 Friday shows. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

THURSDAY 2.13

FASHION

OLEANA: CASTING ON FOR A NEW GENERATION

NORWAY HOUSE

Oleana is a Norwegian fashion brand that specializes in knits and "fair made" clothes with a distinctive Scandinavian flair. Fair made means that the company uses sustainable materials, and insists on an ethical work environment. Oleana was founded in 1992, partly in response to manufacturing jobs leaving Norway. During her tenure, lead designer Solveig Hisdahl won numerous awards, and her work has been featured in exhibitions throughout the world. In 2018, as Hisdahl prepared for retirement, the company welcomed a new head of

The Walker Art Center hosts a giant retrospective for Jasper Johns.



JASPER JOHNS, UNTITLED, 2000

design, Matilda Norberg. A graduate of the Royal College of Art in London, Norberg has demonstrated that she's not afraid to go bold with shapes and colors. See examples of both women's contributions at the Norway House, where Oleana's looks, both past and present, will be on display. Just in case you're hoping to take a piece home for

yourself, there will be a pop-up store in the gallery on select days. There will also be an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, February 13. Pop-up dates and hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. February 14-15 and March 17; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 11; noon to 4 p.m. May 17. 913 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-871-2211. **Through April 15** —SHEILA REGAN

FRIDAY 2.14

SEXY ART

SAFWORD: AN EROTIC ART SHOW

A-MILL ARTIST LOFTS MUSEUM

As any responsible kinkster knows, safety and consent are of utmost importance. With that in mind, this show at A-Mill will serve as a safe space for artists, performers, and, um, bakers to set their sexual fantasies free for all to see. Around 80 or so artists will have steamy work on display, with pieces ranging from merely suggestive (a pair of slugs locked in an embrace, flowers in bloom) to full-on penetration. Onsite entertainment will be erotic as well, with pole-dance performances, BDSM demonstrations, and a shibari (aka rope/knot play) installation for those looking to explore all the different things that people get off to. Twin Spirits Distillery will serve libations, and Foxcakes will bring chocolate penises and "pussycake" cupcakes on V-Day. The two-night event is presented by Otherworldly Arts Collective, and tickets can be found at btt.boldtypetickets.com. 21+. 7 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday. \$20 online/\$25 at the door. 301 SE Main St. (enter through the red door on Southeast Third Avenue), Minneapolis. **Through Saturday** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

PARTY

HEARTGASM

STRIKE THEATER

Words can make you fall in love or completely break your heart. The folks behind Heartgasm know this, and plan to wield this power at their two-day V-Day event. Hosted by Allison Broeren, founder of SlamMN's much-loved Erotic Poetry Slam, this event features a stacked lineup of award-winning wordsmiths. They include Gregory Pickett (Moth Story Grand Slam Champion), Pearl Warren (2019 Erotica Poetry Slam Champion), and Paul Canada Nemeth (Story SlamMN!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ►



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THEATER

DOG LOGIC

THEATRE IN THE ROUND

Hartel Daggett, the lackadaisical lead character of Tom Srelich's dark comedy *Dog Logic*, isn't the slightest bit concerned with upward mobility. Contentedly detached from the frantic pace of modern life, the former hippie resides on a desolate, 40-acre pet cemetery. Having inherited the property from his late father, Hartel is perfectly happy to serve as a devoted caretaker to the spirits of deceased animals whose former owners have long stopped coming by to pay respects. Hartel keeps a lonely vigil with these forlorn pets, including his own dearly departed dog, Yappy. Though Hartel lives in his own universe of witty monologues and philosophical queries, the outside world soon intrudes in the form of three visitors: an aspiring real estate mogul with grandiose delusions for the property; his police officer ex-wife, who is frustrated by his lack of drive; and his mother, who abandoned him to follow her calling as an evangelist. As the characters press their questionable claims from the center of the Theatre in the Round Players' singular stage, audiences

will have a judicious view of every ludicrous argument in this idiosyncratic examination of the dysfunctional demands of responsibility, practicality, and maturity. 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$22. 245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-333-3010. **Through March 8** —BRAD RICHASON

ART/GALLERY

UNLOVED CREATURES 2020

ROGUE BUDDHA GALLERY

These creatures may be unloved, but they aren't unlovable. Just in time for Valentine's Day, the monster gang is back for a show at Rogue Buddha Gallery. At this group exhibition, you'll find works featuring sea serpents, space creatures, and the occasional circus oddity. Meet Beefcake, the world's smallest chicken; an ethereal rabbit goddess; and a one-eyed candy corn on legs. Participating artists include Eli Libson, Alex Kuno, Heather Renaux, John Sauer, Angel Hawari, DC Ice, Kao Lee, and Jessie McNally. 7 to 11 p.m. Free. 357 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-331-3889. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SATURDAY 2.15

ART/MUSEUM

AN ART OF CHANGES: JASPER JOHNS PRINTS, 1960-2018

WALKER ART CENTER

American flags. Targets. Collage. As banal as some of Jasper Johns's subject matter and motifs may seem, his technique was muscular and his work was freighted with hidden socio-

political meaning. Or not so hidden, as in the toothbrush mounted with human teeth and titled *The Critic Smiles*. Decades after he helped bridge Abstract Expressionism as one of the artists ushering in a new era known as Pop Art, Johns's work—especially his printmaking—continues to engage. This exhibition, a selection of 90 pieces drawn from the Walker Art Center's collection, surveys six decades of the artist's printmaking oeuvre. A few paintings and sculptures are also included. There will be a Walker After Hours preview party on Saturday, February 15, starting at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for the opening; the show is free with general admission otherwise. 1750 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-375-7600. **Through September 20** —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

DANCE

RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY: WRITTEN IN WATER

ORDWAY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most consistently impressive attributes of a Ragamala Dance Company performance is the group's ability to infuse a traditional style with their own sense of creativity. The mesmerizing multimedia piece *Written in Water* is a perfect example. Figuratively reimagining the ancient Indian board game Paramapadam (colloquially known in the West as Snakes and Ladders), *Written in Water* depicts our passing lifetimes as a series of ever shifting

moments, represented by the dancers' deft navigation of the delicate steps between sorrow and jubilation. As conceptualized by co-artistic directors, the mother-daughter team of Raneen and Aparna Ramaswamy, *Written in Water* represents an exploration of transitory existence that is deeply informed by Indian culture, yet still accessible to general audiences. Contributing to this singular vision are synchronized light projections that serve to evocatively highlight the Ragamala dancers against an evolving backdrop of paintings from acclaimed visual artist V. Keshav. The piece also utilizes a five-person musical ensemble performing a score co-commissioned from Carnatic composer Prema Ramamurthy and Iraqi-American composer Amir ElSaffar. 7:30 p.m. \$27-\$42. 345 Washington St., St. Paul; 651-224-4222. —BRAD RICHASON

ART/GALLERY

UNTITLED 16

SOO VISUAL ARTS CENTER

SooVAC's flagship juried exhibition returns for its 16th installation this weekend. Each year, the south Minneapolis gallery invites artists to submit pieces, regardless of their chosen medium, experience level, or content of the work. The result? An art buffet of what's happening now on the scene, told through a variety of perspectives and aesthetics. This year Natalie Bell, associate curator at the New Museum in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ►

SUNDAY

DRAG

TRIXIE MATTEL: GROWN UP

PANTAGES THEATRE

From the sounds of it, Trixie Mattel's latest traveling production, *Grown Up*, is a full-on variety show. There will be comedy sets, videos, storytelling, live music, a full band, and costume changes (five in the opening song alone!). "My brain

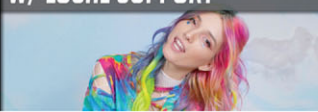
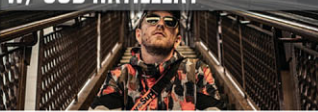
is like a little mini blender. Whatever media I take in gets defecated out into my personal style and material," the Wisconsin native recently told Entertainment Weekly. Things she's been "eating" lately harken back to the peak variety-show era of the '60s and '70s, as Mattel went on a *Brady Bunch* binge session and took a deep dive into vintage fashion magazines. When she's not shitting out spectacular performances onstage, Mattel is busy releasing folksy albums, launching her own makeup line, and racking up YouTube likes talking about the news of the day with Katya, another *RuPaul's Drag Race* alum. 8 p.m. \$44. 710 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER



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FEB 22 DAN PERRY W/ DAWSON, HIMSELF & BOWDIZZ 	FEB 23 MOTHERFOLK W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	FEB 27 MOODY GOOD W/ EFFIN 	FEB 28 COOKIE MONSTA W/ SUPPORT TBA 
FEB 28 GOWNS DEBUT RELEASE SHOW 	FEB 29 EKALI A WORLD AWAY TOUR 	MAR 05 LIZZY JANE W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	MAR 06 BREATHE CAROLINA DEADTHETOUR 
MAR 06 CHARLESTHEFIRST W/ THE WIDDLER & GOOPSTEPPA 	MAR 07 BLUNTS & BLONDES W/ SUBDOCTA & BAWLDY 	MAR 12 LOST W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	MAR 13 BOOGIE T.RIO RIDDIM & BLUES TOUR 
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A-LIST

Pairing Girl Scout cookies with beer makes for a delicious adult treat.



SISYPHUS BREWING

CONTINUED FROM SUNDAY ►

NYC, has selected a collection of pieces from artists including Amelia Biewald, Nancy Hicks, Melissa Loop, Emmett Ramstad, Laura Stack, and many others. The opening reception is this Saturday, February 15, from 6 to 9 p.m. Free. 2909 Bryant Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-871-2263. **Through March 21** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SUNDAY 2.16

BARHOPPING

PUT UP OR SHUT UP N64 MARIO KART TOURNAMENT

BRIT'S PUB

This Sunday, fans of Mario Kart will be able to test their skills at this daylong battle. The gaming system will be the N64, and there will be two tournaments: one for racers and one for those who prefer to battle. For the race, players will take a four-course tour, chosen by a random number generator (pray you don't get the Rainbow Road campaign). If you manage to escape elimination, at the grand finale you'll be expected to race through all 16 levels. The Mario Kart battle will be similar, as that number generator will choose your battleground until there's only one player left. This all goes down at the upstairs Clubhouse, and will also feature happy hour specials, retro game

trivia, and other fun shenanigans. You can sign up early on eventbrite. Noon to 5 p.m. Mario Kart race entry is \$10, battle entry is \$5, and it's free to watch. 1110 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-3908. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

MONDAY 2.17

BARHOPPING

GIRL SCOUT COOKIE WEEK

SISYPHUS BREWING

Who doesn't love cookies? At least one Sisyphus customer. "We had invited a Girl Scout to set up a table to just sell the cookies," owner Sam Harriman remembers. "A patron with clear aggression issues yelled at the Girl Scout that she had no business being in a bar.... This made her very upset, so we brainstormed a way to help her sell as many cookies as possible." Thus, Girl Scout Cookie week was born. The event is now in its fifth year, pairing Girl Scout cookies with a curated beer flight. Try their Oak Fermented Lager, the Flagship IPA, Peanut Butter Jackpot, and Churro Imperial Brown Ale, each intended to go with a different cookie. They'll be available during business hours all week. 3 to 10 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; 3 to 11 p.m. Thursday; noon to midnight Friday. Free. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Ste 100, Minneapolis; 612-444-8674. **Through Friday** —LOREN GREEN

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FILM

HARDLY, QUINN

Birds of Prey: Just another blah *Suicide Squad* movie from DC



CLAUDETTE BARIUS/WARNER BROS.

BY TONY LIBERA

Ah shit, here we go again. Harley Quinn's back in another bleh DC blockbuster.

After the crime against humanity that was *Suicide Squad*, it's kind of a shock. That juiced-up *Dirty Dozen* wannabe is the worst entry in the DC Extended Universe—and that's saying something. But hey, money talks, and that movie netted half a billion dollars worldwide... so why not?

Birds of Prey (and the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn) picks up sometime after the dumb events of *Suicide Squad*. And yes, it's as kooky and convoluted as the full title suggests. Via voiceover and a little bit of fourth wall-breaking, Harley (Margot Robbie) informs the audience that the Joker kicked her to the curb. Without a boyfriend or crew for the first time in forever, Harley goes even more off the rails. You know: clubbing, getting drunk, blowing up a chemical plant.

When word of her big breakup hits the streets, Harley realizes she no longer has Mr. J's protection—which means every Gothamite she's ever wronged is now out to kill her. That includes rich kid/club owner/supervillain Roman Sionis (Ewan McGregor), also known as Black Mask. Fortunately, Sionis's henchman, Zsasz

(Chris Messina), gets pickpocketed, losing a diamond worth a fortune, which Harley is expertly equipped to get back. But when she finds out the gem was swiped by a young orphan (Ella Jay Basco), things get (even more) complicated.

Birds of Prey has a few big issues, though its unnecessary complexity tops the list. In addition to Harley's deal, we also get a full origin story for Huntress (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), a sort-of fleshed-out subplot for Detective Renee Montoya (Rosie Perez), and a wasted opportunity with Black Canary (Jurnee Smollett-Bell), whose bit part here belies her Justice League status. Of course, this is supposed to be a *Birds of Prey* movie—not a Harley solo outing—so it makes sense to bring the team's different pieces together. It's just that things get sloppy in execution and therefore entirely out of hand. The focus never really leaves Harley, and a nonlinear storyline doesn't do the film any favors.

Beyond that, *Birds of Prey* tries way too hard to be *Deadpool*. The R rating allows for extra-cool comic book-y violence, but after some solid early tone-setters, the action becomes perfunctory and even boring. The devil-may-care approach to absolutely everything undermines any real depth, which wouldn't matter if *Birds of Prey* just said, "Fuck it, let's be stupid and

BIRDS OF PREY (AND THE FANTABULOUS EMANCIPATION OF ONE HARLEY QUINN)

directed by Cathy Yan
area theaters, now playing

goofy." But as with *Suicide Squad*, there's this forced "You're my new family" emotional appeal that goes against the movie's own internal logic.

That's not to say a bonkers/deep story can't be pulled off. *Batman: The Animated Series* did a significantly better version of the Joker-Harley split almost 30 years ago. Which raises a question about *Birds of Prey*: If Warner Bros. is really decommitting from a strict, shared universe (as *Joker* suggests), why not make the Joker the big bad instead of Black Mask? It's one thing for the Birds to come into their own against a random Batman villain, but imagine how profoundly empowering it would be for Harley to confront her longtime abuser and kill the Joker instead. If only.

Given *Joker*'s success and Robbie's heavy hand in the production, I had high hopes that DC was moving in the right direction. Sadly, *Birds of Prey* feels like more of the same. Bad news for people like me; great news for people who like other DCEU movies.

Birds of Prey is better than *Suicide Squad*, but that's a low, low bar.

CARD TRICKS

The White Card shows how the deck is really stacked



CAROLINE YANG

BY JAY GABLER

“P laying the race card” is an offensive idiom when it comes from the mouths of white people who seem to resent the fact that they don’t have any “cards” to play. In *The White Card*, Claudia Rankine suggests that they should examine their own hands a little more carefully.

The white characters in Rankine’s 2018 play, now onstage at Penumbra Theatre, certainly have a lot to say about the experiences of black people. Charles (Bill McCallum) and Virginia (Michelle O’Neill) are a middle-aged couple who’ve devoted much of their extraordinary wealth to art addressing African-American trauma: Representations of violence hang on the walls of their home alongside a monochromatic white painting by Robert Rauschenberg.

“It was curated to brighten the room,” says Charles when a visitor remarks upon that piece. The visitor is Charlotte (Lynnette R. Freeman), an artist whose current work involves restaging and photographing the scene of the 2015 Charleston church shooting. With Charlotte’s star on the rise, Charles and Virginia want to buy her latest series; their art dealer, Eric (John Catron), is on hand, nervously, to assist.

Charlotte is the only black character in the cast, which also includes Alex (Jay Owen Eisenberg), the adult son of Charles and Virginia. Using these characters, Rankine illuminates the differences and similarities in the ways ostensibly sympathetic white people talk about race.

Charles and Virginia glory in supporting important work that decries racism,

THE WHITE CARD

Penumbra Theatre
270 N. Kent St., St. Paul
651-224-3180; through March 1

but their dialogue is full of slips that reveal their privilege. Penumbra’s opening-night audience didn’t miss them, and neither does Alex, an activist involved with Black Lives Matter. He’s quick to criticize his parents, but also thinks he can lecture Charlotte about how she needs to “wake up.” Eric is more political, but he’s also part of an art-world hierarchy built on white supremacy.

While it takes the characters a while to get at the play’s deepest truths, there’s also not a lot of unnecessary small talk or extraneous stage business. At a tight 80 minutes, *The White Card* is a focused conversation about race and art. Instead of congratulating themselves for marking black pain, Charlotte argues, white people should do the harder work of looking at the way they inhabit their own skin.

It’s a bracing play from a major writer with a local connection: Rankine’s acclaimed *Citizen: An American Lyric* is published by Minneapolis’s Graywolf Press (as is *The White Card*, her first published play). At Penumbra, director Talvin Wilks keeps the pace taut, making effective use of a sprawling all-white stage designed by Chelsea M. Warren.

The cast bring out the texture and humor in an often declamatory script; everyone except the increasingly concerned Charlotte spends most of the play on the defensive, which can happen when people are asked to examine their privilege. It’s an important conversation that needs to continue. **C**

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“**T**here is no breakthrough without breakdown.” These are the words that rattle through my head the first time I listen to Bob Ross Mob Boss’s new EP. *Everything’s Chrome in the Future* is just so frenetic. There’s so much going on, with loose Nirvana basslines hitching to mathy Modest Mouse guitar and Aaron Mylung’s long, chesty Scott Weiland vocals stretching out while Bray Fischer chimes in morosely. It’s so hectic that you forget just how necessary it all is.

The line barging into my thoughts comes from a Mindy Nettifee poem, which shares no resemblance to the new Bob Ross Mob Boss EP. Nettifee’s poem is one of absolution, one that rectifies a lifetime of contempt with four stanzas of affirmation. But *Everything’s Chrome in the Future* offers little in the way of forgiveness: It’s a tribute to the power of self-loathing. Across its six songs, Mylung and Fischer suffer through brutal realization after brutal realization. So why are these worlds converging in my mind?

“We’re always on this quest to figure out what on earth we’re even doing,” Fischer says. “Someone once tweeted at us that we’re like if a hardcore band and a new wave band got together, which, like, yeah.”

With a name like Bob Ross Mob Boss and an EP title borrowed from an episode of *SpongeBob SquarePants*, Fischer and Mylung obviously have a sense of humor about what they’re doing. They almost called the record *Wet Hot American Bummer*, but worried that would make them sound like too much of a parody.

“I don’t enjoy interacting with bands that take themselves too seriously,” Fischer says. To them, the music is dark enough without the whole band having to live the darkness like a brand. “The music is abrasive sonically,” Mylung adds, “but we don’t want to turn people away with the message.”

Humor is Bob Ross Mob Boss’s principal defense mechanism. On Twitter, they fling sardonic self-owns and halfhearted gig promo, in keeping with the spirit of BoJackian nihilism that springs at you on songs like “Never Meant to Live”: “And I know that I don’t wanna die/But I don’t know why/And I know that I wanna stay alive/But sometimes I don’t try.”

These are the words that erase Nettifee’s from my mind. They erase everything, leaving me disoriented, pawing for something else to think, something more hopeful and less true. Only two songs into the EP, they’ve

EVERYTHING SUCKS IN THE FUTURE

Bob Ross Mob Boss play self-loathing’s greatest hits

BY JERARD FAGERBERG



HAZEL JACOBS

arrived at a spectacular breakdown, and I am there with them.

Fischer and Mylung met at a Northfield bar in 2017. Fischer was attending St. Olaf, and Mylung was a self-described “townie.” One karaoke night, they both put in for the Strokes’ “Someday,” and the DJ called Fischer before Mylung got their chance to tear through it. Mylung jokingly confronted Fischer, and the two laughed it off over a beer.

“We were both in two different bands at the time, and we were playing shows with each other, and they both broke up at the same time,” Mylung remembers. “We were looking to fill a void in each others’ lives.”

Fischer and Mylung moved into a house in St. Paul and started writing songs together. Their tastes immediately clashed. Fischer had a jones for ennui and R.E.M.; Mylung never understood Michael Stipe. Mylung experienced ska at a formative age and preferred snotty pop-punk, while Fischer was too busy listening to Dr. Dog to skank dance at Warped Tour.

But both were outcasts growing up, gender-fluid misfits struggling with depression and dysphoria. This shared experience made writing lyrics easier. Every song on *Everything’s Chrome in the Future* was written by the two together, including “I’m Okay (I Promise),” the truest expression

of their common darkness—and how they conquer it.

The song title is a nose-thumb to My Chemical Romance, and damn if that isn’t just perfect Bob Ross Mob Boss. This is a band that was nearly named Pfft singing the words, “My depression is no desert of the soul/It’s the softly falling snow settling in the trees.” Press your ear to the chest of this record and you can hear its heart beating through layers of calcified sarcasm.

“A lot of this music is therapy,” Fischer says. “The concept of dissociation, even dysphoria, it’s there because we’re both nonbinary, we both have weird relationships with gender. A lot of this is trying to find an answer to why we feel the way that we do and why we don’t feel the way that people who function well in society do.”

Mylung puts it more simply: “Sometimes I feel like an alien, and music helps me not feel that way.”

It’s on “Honestly, Honesty” that Nettifee’s words cease being coincidence. A bulb is illuminated to chase the dark. The prophetic breakthrough, beaming through my speakers in a hoarse claxon of a chorus.

*Honestly, honesty,
Is not something I’m used to
But I don’t know if I believe
Any words you say to me
You’re taking up the air I breathe
Once again I’m losing sleep
And I know my friends will always be there
for me*

Mylung remembers the lines jumping out at them while on a drive home from a concert. They opened their Notes app and dashed the words into the screen. Later, Fischer slapped on a prodigious riff.

“Honestly, Honesty” has become the flint against which the band sparks their set. When those titular words hit at the top of the chorus, eyes open in the crowd.

Fists fly into the sky. Inhibitions dissolve like tissue paper in the rain. It’s the kind of moment that

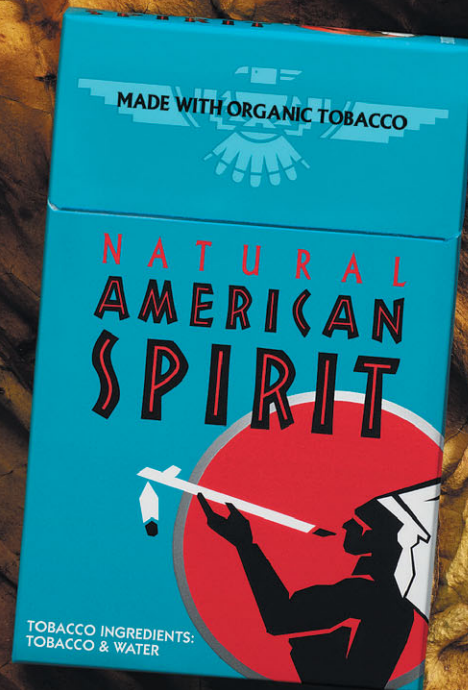
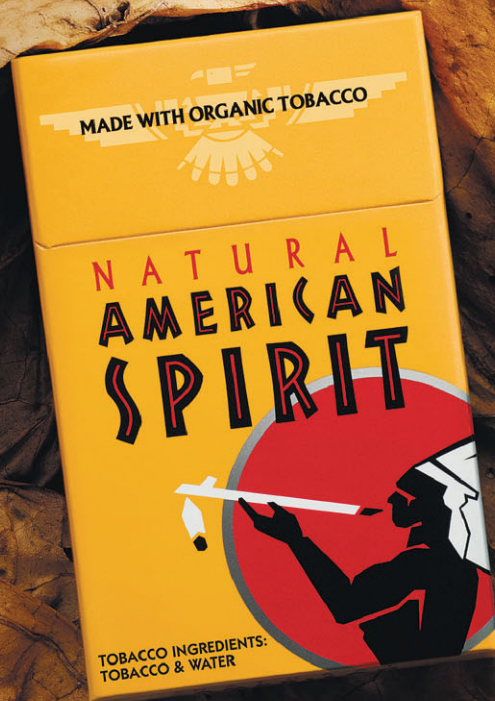
can stick with you, only to reappear suddenly when something makes you feel the same way again.

“I once joked about writing the music that I needed when I was in middle school,” Fischer says. “Every time someone tells me that my music makes them feel good, I’m just like, ‘Cool, I’m gonna keep doing this.’”

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Saturday, February 15 1:00 pm DICK TRACY (1990)	Friday, February 21 8:00 pm BEN NOBLE ALBUM RELEASE <i>WITH MAPLE & BEECH</i>
Saturday, February 15 8:00 pm A PATSY CLINE VALENTINE <i>WITH TRAILER TRASH AND JANIE MILLER</i>	Saturday, February 22 1:00 pm SPIRITED AWAY (2002)
Sunday, February 16 7:30 pm AL CHURCH'S CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA PRESENTS: <i>THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC (1928)</i>	Saturday, February 22 8:00 pm A NIGHT AT THE THEATRE <i>TRIBUTE TO QUEEN WITH JONNY JAMES & THE HALL OF FAMES</i>

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Sunday, February 16th The Cedar and KFAI Present SEAMUS EGAN <i>with Kerri Joy (of Sister Tree)</i> Doors 7PM / Show 7:30PM / All Ages / Seated / \$20 ADV / \$22 DOS	Saturday, February 22nd The Cedar Presents THE CEDAR COMMISSIONS NIGHT TWO <i>with Rebecca Nicholson, Dua Saleh, and Tensae Fayise</i> Doors 7PM / Show 7:30PM / All Ages / \$10 GA / \$15 Pass

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

PALACE

7TH ST. ENTRY, WEDNESDAY 2.12

Palace write grand, rousing, mournful songs, with anthemic qualities only partially disguised by buckets of lilting guitar feedback. On the London band's recent *Life After*, the airborne riffs ("Life After") jangle and echo solemnly through spacious expanses, while the quieter acoustic numbers ("Face in the Crowd") assume the pained cadences of English folk-soul. With Janet May. 18+. 7 p.m. \$18/\$20. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —LUCAS FAGEN

BRANDI CARLILE

THE FILLMORE, WEDNESDAY 2.12-FRIDAY 2.14

Whether harmonizing elegantly with her country supergroup the Highwomen or declaiming her own starker, folksier solo material, Brandi Carlile has a gift for the plainspoken anthem. On the first night of her three-night residency, which inaugurates the new Fillmore near Target Field, she'll play a stripped-down trio set; the following two feature her full band, and on Valentine's Day she'll perform her 2010 *XOBC* EP in its entirety. 7 p.m. \$101. 521 N. Fifth St., Minneapolis; 800-745-3000. —LUCAS FAGEN

CALEXICO/IRON & WINE

PALACE THEATRE, FRIDAY 2.14

The Americana multigenre fusioners in Calexico have been collaborating with indie-folk paragon Iron & Wine on and off for more than a decade, with the bands sporadically appearing on each other's albums. On the recent *Years to Burn*, the two groups' first joint project since 2005's *In the Reins*, Calexico's sun-baked groove adds musical heft to Sam Beam's enigmatic, elegiac folk songs. With Madison Cunningham. 18+. 6:30 p.m. \$39.50/\$59.50. 17 W. Seventh Pl., St. Paul; 800-514-3849. —LUCAS FAGEN

EXCISION

THE ARMORY, FRIDAY 2.14 AND SATURDAY 2.15

Corralling giant synthesizer slabs, comedically crunchy explosions, bone-headed drums, and angelic guest singers who paradoxically sound right at home into an exhaustingly grandiose musical rollercoaster, dubstep pioneer Excision thrives on raw sensationalism. His show features an immersive audiovisual display including multiple laser machines—aptly, for his music is itself a sort of light show. With Virtual Riot, Dion Timmer, Wooli, Champagne Drip, G-Rex, Lucii, and Calcium. 18+. \$55-\$75+. 500 S. Sixth St., Minneapolis; 612-315-3965. —LUCAS FAGEN

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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): Now that she's in her late 40s, Aries comedian and actress Tig Notaro is wiser about love. Her increased capacity for romantic happiness has developed in part because she's been willing to change her attitudes. She says, "Instead of being someone who expects people to have all the strengths I think I need them to have, I resolved to try to become someone who focuses on the strengths they do have." In accordance with this Valentine's season's astrological omens, Aries, I invite you to meditate on how you might cultivate more of that aptitude yourself.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Taurus artist Joan Miró loved to daub colored paint on canvases. He said he approached his work in the same way he made love: "a total embrace, without caution, prudence thrown to the winds, nothing held back." In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to invoke a similar attitude with all the important things you do in the coming weeks. Summon the ardor and artistry of a creative lover for all-purpose use. Happy Valentine Daze, Taurus!

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In 1910, Gemini businessman Irving Seery was 20 years old. One evening he traveled to the Metropolitan Opera in New York City to see an opera starring the gorgeous and electrifying soprano singer Maria Jeritza. He fell in love instantly. For the next 38 years he remained a bachelor as he nursed his desire to marry her. His devotion finally paid off. Jeritza married Seery in 1948. Dear Gemini, in 2020, I think you will be capable of a heroic feat of love that resembles Seery's. Which of your yearnings might evoke such intensely passionate dedication? Happy Valentine Daze!

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): I've been married twice, both times to the same woman. Our first time around, we were less than perfectly wise in the arts of relationship. After our divorce and during the few years we weren't together, we each ripened into more graceful versions of ourselves; we developed greater intimacy skills. Our second marriage has been far more successful. Is there a comparable possibility in your life, Cancerian? A chance to enhance your ability to build satisfying togetherness? An opening to learn practical lessons from past romantic mistakes? Now is a favorable time to capitalize. Happy Valentine Daze!

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): In 1911, the famous Russian poet Anna Akhmatova and the famous Italian painter Amedeo Modigliani were in love with each other. Both were quite poor, though. They didn't have much to spend on luxuries. In her memoir, Akhmatova recalled the time they went on a date in the rain at the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris. Barely protected under a rickety umbrella, they amused each other by reciting the verse of Paul Verlaine, a poet they both loved. Isn't that romantic? In the coming weeks, I recommend you experiment with comparable approaches to cultivating love. Get back to raw basics. Happy Valentine Daze!

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): [Warning: Poetry alert! If you prefer your horoscopes to be exclusively composed of practical, hyper-rational advice, stop reading now!] Happy Valentine Daze, Virgo! I hope there's someone in your life to whom you can give a note like the one I'll offer at the end of this oracle. If there's not, I trust you will locate that person in the next six months. Feel free to alter the note as you see fit. Here it is. "When you and I are together, it's as if we have been reborn into luckier lives; as if we can breathe deeper breaths that fill our bodies with richer sunlight; as if we see all of the world's beauty that alone we were blind to; as if the secrets of our souls' codes are no longer secret."

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): In the course of your life, how many people and animals have truly loved you? Three? Seven? More? I invite you to try this Valentine experiment: Write down their names on a piece of paper. Spend a few minutes visualizing the specific qualities in you that they cherished, and how they expressed their love, and how you felt as you received their caring attention. Then send out a beam of gratitude to each of them. Honor them with sublime appreciation for having treasured your unique beauty. Amazingly enough, Libra, doing this exercise will magnetize you to further outpourings of love in the coming weeks.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): [Warning: Poetry alert! If you prefer your horoscopes to be exclusively composed of practical, hyper-rational advice, stop reading now!] Happy Valentine Daze, Scorpio! I invite you to copy the following passage and offer it to a person who is receptive to deepening their connection with you. "Your healing eyes bless the winter jasmine flowers that the breeze blew into the misty creek. Your welcoming prayers celebrate the rhythmic light of the mud-loving cypress trees. Your fresh dreams replenish the eternal salt that nourishes our beloved song of songs. With your melodic breath, you pour all these not-yet-remembered joys into my body." (This lyrical message is a blend of my words with those of Scorpio poet Odysseus Elytis.)

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): The poet Virgil, a renowned author in ancient Rome, wrote three epic poems that are still in print today. His second was a masterpiece called the *Georgics*. It took him seven years to write, even though it was only 2,740 lines long. So on average he wrote a little over one line per day. I hope you'll use him as inspiration as you toil over your own labors of love in the coming weeks and months. There'll be no need to rush. In fact, the final outcomes will be better if you do them slowly. Be especially diligent and deliberate in all matters involving intimacy and collaboration and togetherness.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): [Warning: Poetry alert! If you prefer your horoscopes to be exclusively composed of practical, hyper-rational advice, stop reading now!] Happy Valentine Daze, Capricorn! I invite you to copy the following passage and offer it to a person who is ready to explore a more deeply lyrical connection with you. "I yearn to earn the right to your whispered laugh, your confident caress, your inscrutable dance. Amused and curious, I wander where moon meets dawn, inhaling the sweet mist in quest of your questions. I study the joy that my imagination of you has awakened. All the maps are useless, and I like them that way. I'm guided by my nervous excitement to know you deeper. Onward toward the ever-fresh truth of your mysterious rhythms!"

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian author Derek Walcott had a perspective on love that I suspect might come in handy for you during this Valentine season. "Break a vase," he wrote, "and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole." I urge you to meditate on how you could apply his counsel to your own love story, Aquarius. How might you remake your closest alliances into even better and brighter versions of themselves?

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Piscean poet Saul Williams wrote a meditation I hope you'll consider experimenting with this Valentine season. It involves transforming mere kisses into *SUBLIME KISSES*. If you choose to be inspired by his thoughts, you'll explore new sensations and meanings available through the act of joining your mouth to another's. Ready? Here's Saul: "Have you ever lost yourself in a kiss? I mean pure psychedelic inebriation. Not just lustful petting but transcendental metamorphosis, when you became aware that the greatness of this other being is breathing into you. Licking your mouth, like sealing a thousand fleshy envelopes filled with the essence of your passionate being, and then opened by the same mouth and delivered back to you, over and over again—the first kiss of the rest of your life."

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
	20			21					22	23				
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26	27	28					29					30	31	
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57						58	59				60			61
62						63					64			
65						66					67			

FOLLOW ME

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Is in need of extra rest and hot tea, maybe
- 5 “Weird Al” specialty
- 10 IBC rival
- 14 107, in Roman numerals
- 15 Texas city where FedEx Office is headquartered
- 16 Boston : T :: D.C. : ____
- 17 TikTok user, likely
- 18 Gourmand
- 19 Multi-generational baseball players
- 20 Ray-catching session
- 22 “Just one more thing” detective
- 24 Tip of Spain?
- 25 Univ. sections
- 26 Moving about
- 29 Location of less risk
- 32 Strong pad
- 33 Harry Potter’s friend Hermione ____
- 35 Part of a charge
- 37 Google cloud service
- 39 Where all roads lead to, metaphorically
- 40 N.W.A.’s DJ whose name sounds like a color
- 41 Wire-haired terrier of screwball whodunits
- 42 Trucker’s gadget
- 44 Roughly half the world
- 45 More agreeable
- 47 Sponsor for the Garden where the Celtics and Bruins play
- 49 They’ll help you remove a spare tire
- 50 Puncher Max
- 51 Supporting, with “of”

- 54 Short-in-the-front-long-in-the-back haircuts
- 57 Principle of zen
- 58 Irreplaceable string
- 60 Stretches during history class
- 62 Things in the cart
- 63 Must, colloquially
- 64 Alternatives to bow ties
- 65 Lavish care (on)
- 66 Buddy of reruns
- 67 They’re no longer seeing each other

Down

- 1 Do something!
- 2 Currier’s lithographic partner
- 3 “In ____ of flowers...”
- 4 Was human
- 5 Trident user
- 6 Pure reason philosopher
- 7 Swear words
- 8 Undivided
- 9 Shove down someone’s throat
- 10 With a false nature
- 11 Molecular part
- 12 Smoke and then some
- 13 Not good, not bad
- 16 Thick dessert drinks
- 21 Muffin top, e.g.
- 23 Abbr. on a cordless
- 25 One-named ‘50s bombshell
- 26 Meat packaging letters
- 27 Language of the Storting
- 28 Last Supper question
- 29 Sounds from the sack

- 30 Stuffed grape leaves
- 31 First name in talk
- 34 Simultaneous purchase and sale of assets
- 36 Deliberately lose games to get the #1 pick
- 38 Action star nicknamed “The Muscles From Brussels”
- 40 Sing in lederhosen
- 42 Poet ____ Wade
- 43 Blue cheese alternative
- 46 They’re difficult to work with
- 48 Cakewalk
- 50 Montana city named after a hill
- 51 “Don’t believe a word of it”
- 52 Their motto is “Animus in consulendo liber”: Abbr.
- 53 Stew
- 54 Yoga studio handouts
- 55 Cereal not for rabbits
- 56 Quench
- 59 Pitchfork carriers
- 61 Bunk sharer, maybe

Last Week’s Answer

J	A	B	B	A	C	L	U	E	S	K	A	T
A	R	I	O	T	H	U	N	K	T	A	L	E
Z	E	N	D	E	F	E	N	S	E	P	N	I
Z	A	G			R	A	G	E		L	E	D
			R	E	D	T	O	P	E	R	D	I
									A	D	E	N
T	U	P	A	C	A	P	E	S		S	E	E
C	Z	E	C	H	T	H	E	C	H	I	C	K
M	I	A			Y	A	N	G		G	A	Y
			C	U	S	P			J	O	N	
G	U	E	S	S	E	D	S	T	O	R	I	E
A	S	P	E	N		R	I	O	S		X	I
I	M	I	T		K	E	T	C	H	W	H	I
N	A	P	A		E	W	O	K		T	A	L
S	P	E	X		N	U	N	S		S	T	E

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The Girls

I pegged my boyfriend and now he wants to be “the girl”—but how?

My boyfriend and I were having relationship issues until we tried something new: pegging. He wanted to try it, but he was afraid and sometimes said the idea disgusted him. Then we tried it, and it was better than normal vanilla or even kinky bondage sex. It was the most emotionally connected sex we've ever had. I actually pegged him three times in 24 hours. He says now he wants to be “the girl” in our relationship. He doesn't want to transition to become a girl, but to be more “the girl” sexually and emotionally. I see this as sexy and loving. I've always taken care of him in a nurturing way, but this adds so much more. How do I be more “the guy” for my boyfriend who wants to be more “the girl”? Not just sexually, but in everyday life?

THE BOYFRIEND EXPERIENCE

“It's amazing these two found each other,” said Key Barrett, a trained anthropologist. “They communicate and obviously create spaces to be vulnerable together and explore.”

Barrett has studied female-led relationships (FLR) and written books—fiction and nonfiction—about them, and his first concern was your boyfriend succumbing to “sub-frenzy,” or a burning desire to realize all his fantasies at once. You guys aren't new to kink, but you don't want to move too fast. “Pegging opened up a huge box of shiny new emotions and feelings,” said Barrett. “That's great, but they should take it slow, especially if they want this dynamic to be a part of the day-to-day relationship.”

You also need to bear in mind that pegging, while wonderful, won't solve your underlying (and unspecified) “relationship issues.” Unless, of course, the issue was your boyfriend feeling anxious about asking you to peg him.

But, hey, you didn't ask about those other issues—you didn't even name them—so let's focus on your actual question: you being “the guy” and your boyfriend being “the girl.”

“The boyfriend wants TBE to be ‘the guy’ in the relationship to reinforce his desire to be ‘the girl,’” said Barrett, “and she seems okay with this, although she does acknowledge that this would require more than the nurturing and caretaking she's already shown toward him. That's a valid concern. His desire to take the kink



Dan Savage

out of the bedroom and merge it with the day-to-day risks turning her into a kink dispenser. There's also the aspect of the boyfriend's gender stereotyping. Being dominant isn't unique to men, and being submissive isn't a ‘feminine’ trait. There are a lot of alpha men in FLRs who shine in support roles for the women they trust. Female-led relationships don't rely on stereotypes. Indeed, they often flout them by relying not on stereotypical behaviors but on what is a natural dynamic for the couple. In that sense, each FLR is unique.”

While it's possible that “I want to be the girl” are the only words your boyfriend has to describe the dynamic that turns him on, for some men, sacrificing their “male” power and privilege is an intrinsic part of the eroticism of submitting to a dominant woman. And that's okay, too.

“If he legitimately wants to take on a role of supporting her and being her adoring submissive partner while thinking of that role as ‘feminine,’ it could work for them,” said Barrett. “He might really enjoy supporting her decisions and being more of a domestic partner. She might enjoy the support and validation that comes from having a partner who revels in her successes and strength. This could fulfill the ‘caring for him as if I were the boyfriend’ portion (what a loving a statement!) while still feeling natural for TBE.”

So how can you get started as “the guy” in this relationship?

“They should, again, start small,” said Barrett. “Maybe delegate a few tasks that were ‘hers’ to him, and she can tell him how she wants them done,” whatever it is (dishes? laundry? cocksucking?), “as this will help ensure the outcome they both want. I would also recommend they both read about what FLRs are and aren't. FLRs are often kink-friendly, but kink is not required. And they need to remember the key word in ‘female-led relationship’ is ‘relationship.’”

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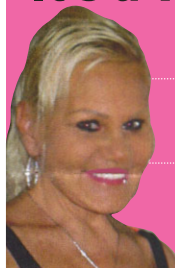
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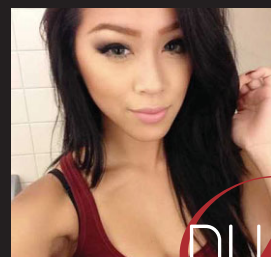
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